

North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department

NEWS RELEASE

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For more information, contact Manager Steve Crandall (701) 594-4445

Early Warning Siren Project Completed at Turtle River State Park

A project to provide a 130 decibel Early Warning Siren, for weather, fire, hazardous materials, and/or other civil defense emergencies was recently completed at Turtle River State Park.

The project was provided as part of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the ND Department of Emergency Services (NDDDES). FEMA covered 75 percent of the costs; NDDDES covered 10 percent; and the ND Parks and Recreation Department covered the remaining 15 percent. Total cost of the project was \$22,630.59

The siren provides early warning of severe thunderstorm, tornado, fire, or other emergency conditions to all recreational visitors to the park as well as those residences in reasonable proximity to the park. Instead of park rangers having to find a way to contact individual visitors who are camping, in cabins, hiking, fishing, or otherwise recreating within the park; the Early Warning Siren will provide notification of an emergency concern to the entire area.

Park Manager Steve Crandall, notes, "The Early Warning Siren will be a significant improvement in the speed in which we can communicate the need for campers and others utilizing the park to seek shelter for a severe thunderstorm or tornado warning, as an example. We will also be developing protocols to activate the siren in case of other emergencies, such as a wildfire or hazardous material spill along Highway 2 that could affect our visitors."

The park has scheduled a TEST of the siren system, for Wednesday, October 22nd, at 1 p.m. At that time, each of the sirens three different tones will be tested and allowed to run. If all is well, this will conclude testing for this season. However, the park will be initiating regular testing of the new siren system; at 1 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month, April through October, each year.

Crandall reminds visitors the Visitor Center is currently the park's designated shelter, but in the event of severe weather, most any of the park structures are a safer place to be than any camping unit. The warning system's primary purpose is to apprise visitors that emergency conditions exist and they should seek additional information to ensure their safety. It is recommended that whenever the siren is activated, visitors immediately seek information to determine the nature and extent of the emergency.